GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2715
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2004
MANUSCRIPT MISSION IN ORISSA
Deo Shri Bikram Keshari

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Manuscript Mission in the State of Orissa; and

(b) the steps the Government has taken to strengthen its stance?

Answer

MINISTER FOR INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND CULTURE (SHRI S.JAIPAL REDDY)

(a) and (b) The National Mission for Manuscripts at present has one Manuscript Resource Centre in Orissa State Museum and two Manuscript Conservation Centres at Sambalpur University and INTACH ICI Orissa Art Conservation Centre. Approximately 90,000 manuscripts in Orissa have been catalogued on the Missions' standard data collection forms and "c-granthavali' software. Between 22 and 26 Nov.2004, a district level survey was organized in thirty districts of Orissa involving about 1500 persons. According to preliminary report, information on about five lakh manuscripts has been collected. Conservation experts were also sent out with surveyors in each district to make an assessment of the state of the manuscripts. Orissa's illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts have also been chosen for the Mission's pilot digitization project. This project seeks to electronically reproduce Orissa's illustrated manuscripts using sophisticated methods of scanning to save them for posterity and make these available to scholars around the country and the world. The Mission works very closely with the State Government to ensure success of its programmes. For the survey of the manuscripts, the Hon'ble Minister for Culture and other prominent government officials in Orissa played a crucial role in awareness building. Further, the Survey was carried out in the districts with the help of local government officials and their networks. For the digitization programme also, the Mission is calling upon the State Government for assistance. In addition to its regular programmes of survey, cataloguing, conservation and digitization, the Mission also carried out awareness programmes to encourage the public to come forward with information on their manuscripts and to conserve the manuscripts they possess. For these programmes also, the Mission requests prominent members of the State Government to make public pleas to this effect and clarify that the Mission seeks to document and not to forcibly take away manuscripts.